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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, December 19, 1930

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

LITERARY
RECEIVED

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Books for the Youngest." Approved by the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A. From an article by Katherine Reeves in the Home Economics
Reminder, July, 1930.

Uncle Ebenezer scowled fiercely at the leg of lamb he was carving and then said in a loud voice:

"When I was young I had a hearty respect for books. But children nowadays don't care anything about their own property or anyone else's. They tear up the finest books or mark them up with pencils and crayons. Nothing is safe from them."

As Billy said under his breath, Uncle Ebenezer was "in a mood." And it was all the result of a visit from two small visitors, aged three and four years, who got into his study while their mother was chatting about Christmas pies and puddings in the kitchen with me.

They used Uncle Ebenezer's library in a very riotous way. They tore out pages from the books, drew pictures in them with his red and blue pencils, and, as a finishing touch, applied library paste, both inside and out. A fine time was had by all at that party -- except Uncle Ebenezer. He was in quite a state when he came home in the midst of it. As a result he growled all through dinner from soup to fruit and said dreadful things about the younger generation.

"Why don't you tell that mother something about bringing up children to learn to love books, not to destroy them, Aunt Sammy?"

I might tell her about an article I read recently written by a friend of mine who has been working with little children in nursery schools and homes for years. It is such a good article that I am sure any mother would enjoy it. The author is Katherine Reeves and she has a lot of helpful ideas about the first books to choose for the child's library.

She believes that parents can build up in their small Jacks and Jills a feeling for books that will carry over into real enjoyment and appreciation when they come to the age of reading and selecting for themselves. Choosing books that suit their age is very important.

Books, like toys, receive a great deal of wear and tear by their small owners at this age and should, therefore, be made to stand it. Linen material or firm paper sturdily bound are the best materials and will help children

realize early that books are permanent and valuable articles in their life, not scraps of paper that will soon be destroyed.

There, Uncle Ebenezer, is a suggestion that should please you.

The content of books, both the pictures and the text, deserves careful consideration also. The illustrations are often the very first pictures the child sees, so make sure that they are simple in design, well-proportioned and large enough to give him the correct impression of the object presented. A single figure or a few simple objects clearly drawn are easier for the child to enjoy than a great many details which are likely to confuse him. Remember that children at this early age are just beginning to learn what pictures mean. Any colors used -- and children love colors in their picture books -- should be clear and artistically combined.

Any child will understand pictures more quickly if they illustrate his immediate experience. He will be interested in and enjoy familiar objects like trains, animals or toys. Avoid grotesque or strange figures until the young reader is older or has had enough experience to interpret them.

Alphabet and number books, the books we used to give children first before we knew all we know today, have no place in the earliest library. Letters and numbers mean nothing to Jack and Jill until they are old enough to begin learning to read.

The stories in these first books should be short and interesting but never exciting. We want Jill to enjoy and learn from her books, not be frightened by them. Naturally, all the stories like the pictures should tie up with the child's own experience. The very young child will enjoy most stories that are simple and brief and filled with repetition. It is better if they tell about the real happenings of everyday life.

What about fairy stories and fanciful tales? Well, the simple ones may have a place in Jack and Jill's literature, but remember to choose them carefully and avoid gruesome and unwholesome elements. To allow the child to find in the stories he hears all the wonder and imaginative appeal of the unreal and avoid any mention of strange things that might frighten him is what the best books can do.

Many cheap, unwholesome and even detrimental books for children are on the market today along with the right kind. Why not choose the best for your children this Christmas?

Now here is that menu I promised you for your Sunday dinner: Roast Leg of Lamb (the directions for that are in that leaflet called "Lamb As You Like It"), Baked Squash, Buttered Spinach or some other green vegetable, Green Tomato Pickle, Carrot and Orange Salad and, for dessert, Lemon Sponge with Custard Sauce.

The very sound of that menu makes me wish Sunday was here and the bell was ringing for dinner.

I want you to have the recipe for that Orange and Carrot Gelatine Salad, one of the prettiest salads you ever saw and the best tasting. Are your pencils and notebooks at hand so that you can take down the ingredients as I read them? I will read slowly.

- 2 tablespoons gelatin
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Tarragon vinegar
- 1 cup orange juice and pulp, and
- 1 cup grated carrot

I'll repeat the ingredients: (REPEAT).

Soak the gelatin in the cold water for 5 minutes. Melt it with the boiling water and add salt, sugar, lemon juice, vinegar, orange juice and pulp and chill. When partly set stir in the carrot, pour into wet individual molds and put in a cold place to set. Turn out on lettuce leaves and serve with mayonnaise or cream salad dressing.

Many of you thrifty housewives have been asking for some inexpensive meal plans, so I am going to discuss that subject next time and give you some low-cost menus prepared especially by the menu specialist.

Monday: "Low-Cost Meals."

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